

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7989

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7655

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, AR

SUBJECT: DEATH TOLL MOUNTS IN ANTI-TERRORIST WAR

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 7386, (B) BUENOS AIRES 7290

1. SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS BASED ON OFFICIAL SOURCES, THE KILLING OF 14 TERRORISTS IN SHOOTOUTS WITH SECURITY FORCES NOV. 16 BRINGS TO 101 THE TOTAL OF SUSPECTED SUBVERSIVES KILLED SINCE THE BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER. WELL OVER HALF (71) WERE KILLED IN THE LA PLATA AREA, WHICH HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF UNUSUALLY HEAVY FIREFIGHTS BETWEEN PROVINCIAL POLICE AND TERRORISTS SINCE THE NOV. 9 BOMBING OF LA PLATA POLICE HEADQUARTERS (REFTEL). SECURITY FORCES HAVE SUFFERED NO FATALITIES AND LESS THAN TEN INJURED IN THE NUMEROUS SEPARATE INCIDENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE TOLL OF TERRORIST DEAD THE FIRST HALF OF NOVEMBER ROSE TO 101 WITH THE REPORTED KILLING OF 14 TERRORISTS IN TWO SEPARATE SHOOTOUTS WITH POLICE IN LA PLATA NOV. 16. DAILY BOX SCORES BASED ON OFFICIALLY RELEASED INFORMATION HAVE APPEARED IN THE PRESS UNDER BANNER HEADLINES. ALL OF THE ACCOUNTS CONCERNING SHOOTOUTS IN PARAS 3 AND 4 THIS CABLE ARE BASED ON INFORMATION IN THESE REPORTS.

3. IN THE NOV. 16 INCIDENT, POLICE KILLED NINE PERSONS DURING
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A MID-NIGHT ATTACK ON A POLICE STATION IN ARANA, NEAR LA PLATA.

REPORTEDLY SOME 40 TO 50 TERRORISTS FIRED ON THE POLICE STATION FROM MOVING CARS, SLIGHTLY WOUNDING SIX SECURITY AGENTS AND DESTROYING THE TRANSMISSION ANTENNA. FOLLOWING THE SHOOTOUT, THE OTHER TERRORISTS ESCAPED IN TWO CARS. LATER ONE OF THE CARS WAS FOUND WITH A DEAD GUERRILLA INSIDE. NO CAPTURES WERE REPORTED. NONE OF THOSE INJURED OR KILLED HAS YET BEEN IDENTIFIED. LATER THAT AFTERNOON FOUR MORE EXTREMISTS WERE KILLED IN A THREE HOUR SHOOTOUT AND CHASE DURING A HOUSE RAID IN A RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD. NAVAL MILITARY SCHOOL DEAN EMILIO MARGUGLIESE WHO LIVED NEXT DOOR WAS REPORTEDLY KILLED IN THE CROSSFIRE.

4. ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF THE LA PLATA KILLINGS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS DURING THE LAST WEEK FOLLOWING THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS BOMBING NOV. 9. (AUTHORITIES LAST WEEK NAMED CIVILIAN CLERK ALFREDO MARTINEZ AS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICE BOMBING IN WHICH ONE FIREMAN DIED AND 11 PERSONS WERE INJURED. MARTINEZ AND HIS WIFE REPORTEDLY FLED FROM THEIR HOME AND ARE STILL AT LARGE.) ALSO REPORTED IN THE LAST WEEK: ON NOV. 10 FOUR EXTREMISTS WERE KILLED DURING A ROADBLOCK SEARCH NEAR VALENTIN ALSINA, EIGHT DIED IN A SHOOTOUT WHILE TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM POLICE IN TWO CARS (TWO POLICE WERE INJURED), FOUR WERE KILLED RESISTING QUESTIONING IN CITY BELL AND THREE MORE WERE KILLED WHILE ATTACKING POLICE DURING A HOUSE SEARCH IN ROSARIO. ON NOV. 12, TWO MEN AND TWO WOMEN WERE KILLED WHILE ATTACKING AN ARMY PATROL IN LA PLATA AND FOUR MORE WERE KILLED DURING A CAR SEARCH IN TOLOSA..FIVE PEOPLE DIED IN A FLAMING CAR WRECK WHILE TRYING TO ESCAPE A POLICE ROADBLOCK NEAR LA PLATA ON NOV. 15. WITH THE CONTINUING VIOLENCE, LA PLATA HAS BECOME PRACTICALLY AN ARMED CAMP WITH ROVING SQUADS OF POLICE AND ARMY UNITS, ROADBLOCKS THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND ON ALL ACCESS ROADS, HOUSE-TO-HOUSE IDENTIFICATION CHECKS AND FREQUENT EVACUATION OF RESIDENTS AS RAIDS DEVELOP INTO GUN BATTLES.

5. EXCEPT FOR THE POLICE STATION BOMBING AND BRIEF TAKEOVER OF RURAL TELEVISION STATION NOV. 3 (BA 7290) (AND THE REPORTED ATTACK ON THE POLICE STATION IN ARANA), TERRORISTS IN THE GREATER BUENOS AIRES AREA HAVE LARGELY RESORTED TO LESS COSTLY ATTACKS AGAINST BUSINESSMEN, PROFESSORS AND OTHER LOWER-RISK (CONSERVATIVE) TARGETS. (THE DEATH OF TEXTILE OESTE COMPANY EXECUTIVE VIRGILIO CONFIDENTIAL

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GARCIA WHO WAS SHOT AT POINT BLANK RANGE OUTSIDE HIS HOME ON TUESDAY (NOV. 14) BRINGS TO NINE THE NUMBER OF SIMILAR EXECUTIVE KILLINGS IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS.) THE TERRORISTS' TACTIC IS APPARENTLY TO BUILD UP SYMPATHETIC SUPPORT AMONG THE LABOR FORCE BY LIQUIDATING "ENEMIES" OF THE WORKERS. A UNION ATTORNEY TOLD EMB SOURCES THAT LAST WEEK'S KILLING OF CANTABRICA PERSONNEL MANAGER ADOLFO VALIS WAS IN RETALIATION FOR DEATH THREATS RECEIVED BY UNION MEMBERS AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FOUR UNION

LEADERS (PRESUMABLY SEIZED BY POLICE OR PARA-POLICE) IN CONNECTION WITH A LABOR-MANAGEMENT CONFLICT AT THE PLANT. SOURCE SAID VALIS' DEATH, WHICH WAS CLAIMED BY THE MONTONEROS, WAS APPLAUDED BY COMPANY WORKERS.

6. ARGENTINE SECURITY AUTHORITIES OF COURSE TIGHTLY CONTROL INFORMATION CONCERNING ANTI-TERRORIST ENCOUNTERS AND INFORMATION WHICH APPEARS IN PRESS ACCOUNTS IS SOLELY BASED ON OFFICIAL REPORTS. EMBASSY IS ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THE INCIDENTS DESCRIBED IN THE CABLE, AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.
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